

PUBLIC SAFETY

Learn to Swim for Safety

► SUMMER VACATIONERS who intend to "beat the heat" by going swimming or boating are being reminded by the American Red Cross that staying alive this summer is more important than staying cool.

A list of 10 sensible water-safety rules are suggested by A. W. Cantwell, national director of the Red Cross safety services, who says, "being safe in, on, or near the water is your personal responsibility. Saving lives starts with saving your own. You can be safe if you make every effort, and you can save others, too."

About 90% of the persons who take advantage of swimming facilities in the U. S. today are poor swimmers or do not swim at all.

1. Learn to swim. You cannot think of a better sport to save your life. With competent instructors, learning to swim can be quick, easy and fun.

2. Always swim with another person who can help you if you get in trouble.

3. Swim in a safe place, usually indi-

cated by the presence of life guards.

4. Know the area. Before diving, make sure the water is deep enough and that there are no hidden objects as submerged rocks, or undertows.

5. Respect the water and know your limitations. Water is a good friend but can be a deadly enemy. Do not go beyond safe limits or your ability.

6. Do not swim right after eating or when overtired or overheated.

7. Try to remain calm in case of trouble. Assume a face-up floating position and slowly move your hands and feet under water.

8. Keep safety equipment in your small boat or canoe. Wear a life vest unless you are a really expert swimmer.

9. Stay with your boat. Most small craft float even when filled with water.

10. Do not over-power your boat. A too-powerful motor makes the boat hard to control and may lead to upsets.

Science News Letter, July 20, 1957

PSYCHOLOGY

"Practice" Cures Habit

► ABOUT HALF of a group of college student nailbiters cured themselves of the habit or showed marked improvement through what psychologists call "negative practice."

The treatment consisted of standing before their bathroom mirrors while they went through the motions of biting their nails without, however, actually biting them. During the pantomime, they repeated "This is what I am supposed not to do." This was continued for half a minute or so. Then they returned to their study or other activities for an hour. Then another practice session.

After three months of the self-treatment, nearly two-thirds of the 57 students had broken the habit or improved. But the record did not look so good after eight to ten months. Then the cures had dropped to about half the group.

In reporting the experiment in the *Psychological Newsletter* (July-August), Dr. Max Smith of City College of the City of New York theorized that this form of treatment worked better on his college student subjects than it would with young children.

Nailbiting probably starts, he explained, as a means of reducing tension due to some underlying cause. In certain cases, even though years may elapse, the underlying causes remain active and the individual continues to bite his nails as a way of reducing the tension.

But in other cases, as time goes by, the underlying causes cease to be operative and the associated tension vanishes. Usually when this happens the person stops biting his nails and so nailbiting is reduced with age. Sometimes, however, the individual

may continue to bite his nails merely as the result of habit. Most college students who still bite their nails are probably in this last category.

Where nailbiting is a means for reducing tension, negative practice might be expected to fix the habit permanently or bring about a change to some other, perhaps more undesirable symptom, Dr. Smith indicated.

But where it is just a residual symptom, a reasonable degree of success from negative practice might be hoped for.

Science News Letter, July 20, 1957

CHEMISTRY

Colored Bricks Have Hues Baked In

► NORMALLY red-burning brick clays have been made to take on virtually all the colors of the rainbow.

The new development was reported by Dr. W. C. Bell, ceramic engineer and head of the industrial experimental program in the School of Engineering at North Carolina State College in Raleigh.

The colored bricks are permanent, acid- and stain-resistant and can be manufactured at surprisingly low cost with typical red clay.

It is done, Dr. Bell says, through the relatively new science of crystalline chemistry. He explains it this way:

"For many years ceramic scientists have dreamed of obtaining greater color variety from red brick clays, which have the dual advantage of being plentiful as well as providing excellent physical properties in the finished building product.

"Now, by delving into the relatively new science of crystalline chemistry, we can at last offer the architect the permanence and other virtues of burned clay products while at the same time permitting him to express design concepts without such strict color limitations."

The new method of coloring bricks varies from the well-known "glazing" system in several respects, according to Dr. Bell. It is, he says, far less expensive and it can be readily adapted to standard production in any modern brick and tile plant.

The color, he reports, is actually a part of the brick surface and may therefore be had in any of the infinite variety of textures associated with regular face brick.

According to Dr. Bell, the new brick developed through crystalline chemistry has a soft, natural and unglassy appearance.

A detailed report on the extensive research which led to the development of the process and the new type of brick was presented to the North Carolina Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Science News Letter, July 20, 1957

● RADIO

Saturday, July 27, 1957, 1:45-2:00 p.m. EDT. "Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over the CBS Radio Network. Check your local CBS station.

Dr. John R. Heller, director, National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Md., will discuss "The Problem of Cancer."

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